

Sample Press Release

September 25, 2002

Rep. _____ votes to back hospitals' right to choose

Says hospitals shouldn't be forced to perform abortions

Washington—Rep. _____ voted today to keep hospitals from being forced to perform abortions against their will. The Abortion Non-Discrimination Act clarifies existing law to clearly state that physicians, doctors, hospitals and other health care organizations retain the right to set their own abortion policies according to their organizational consciences.

"What happened to the right to choose? Doctors, nurses, and hospitals should never be forced to perform abortions if they don't want to," said Rep. _____. "This ought to be common sense. It's a sad statement that we even need this legislation, but we do."

Under current law, "health care entities" are guaranteed the right of conscience when it comes to performing abortions. Lawyers and judges, however, have interpreted the statute to no include hospitals. The bill voted on today would amend that statute to clearly include hospitals.

Pro-abortion organizations have, in recent years, attempted to force hospitals to provide abortion services even if doing so would be contrary to states hospital policy. Valley Hospital, in Palmer Alaska, was told by the Alaska Supreme Court to provide abortions, overturning that state's conscience-protection law.

The American Civil Liberties Union is presently suing Our Lady of Lourdes Healthcare Services in New Jersey, a Catholic organization, in attempt to force it to provide abortions at Rancocas Hospital in Willingboro, New Jersey.

Presently 46 states have statutes protecting hospitals' right of conscience. Recently, the Maryland chapter of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) posted a mission statement on its Web site which included its goal to "increase access to abortion services by requiring Maryland hospitals to provide abortion and other reproductive services."

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